

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FINNISH REACTION TO SWEDISH ELECTION

1. THE SWEDISH ELECTION WAS WATCHED WITH INTEREST IN FINLAND, WHOSE OWN CENTER-LEFT COALITION GOVERNMENT HAD RESIGNED SEPT 17. THE RESULTS WERE INTERPRETED AS SWEDISH VOTERS' PROTEST AT HIGH TAXATION AND THEIR DESIRE FOR CHANGE FROM SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC RULE, WITH THE SHIFT IN POWER SEEN AS EVIDENCE OF THE VITALITY OF SWEDISH DEMOCRACY.

2. WHILE POLITICAL OBSERVERS HERE DO NOT EXPECT THE OPPOSITION VICTORY IN SWEDEN WILL ALTER SWEDISH POLICY TOWARD FINLAND, MANY FEEL IT HOLDS LESSONS FOR FINNS AND MAY HAVE SOME CONSERVATIVE INFLUENCE ON VOTERS IN THE MID-OCTOBER FINNISH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC (SDP) CHAIRMAN SORSA THOUGHT IT PREMATURE TO ASSESS THE DEGREE OF INFLUENCE, SDP VICE CHAIRMAN TYOLAJARVI SAID SHE ASSUMED THAT THE SWEDISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATS' DEFEAT WILL REQUIRE HER PARTY TO PUT MORE EFFORT INTO THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN. COMMUNIST PARTY (SKP) CHAIRMAN SAARINEN SAID NO ANALOGY COULD BE DRAWN FROM DEFEAT OF THE SWEDISH COMMUNISTS BECAUSE THEIR SMALL PARTY HAD NOT OFFERED A REAL LEFTIST ALTERNATIVE TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS. COMMUNIST PAPER KANSAN UUTISET COMMENTED THAT MOVEMENT AWAY FROM THE

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PAGE 02 HELSIN 02018 231452Z

SOCIAL DEMOCRATS IN FINLAND SHOULD BE

TOWARD THE LEFT, AS ONLY THE SKP AND FRONT ORGANIZATION SKDL REPRESENT CHANGE AND RENEWAL IN THE FINNISH CONTEXT.

3. CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES GENERALLY FOUND ENCOURAGING SIGNS IN THE SWEDISH RESULTS. LIBERAL CHAIRMAN TARJANNE HAILED THE VICTORY OF HIS "SISTER" PEOPLES PARTY AS "PROOF THAT HUMAN-ORIENTED SOCIAL THINKING HAS OBTAINED A STRONG FOOTHOLD AMONG THE VOTERS." CONSERVATIVE CHAIRMAN HOLKERI SAID THAT THE SWEDISH PROTEST VOTE AGAINST HIGH TAXATION IS SIGNIFICANT FOR FINNISH POLITICS BECAUSE IT SHOWED THAT THE WILL OF THE VOTERS CAN BE TRANSLATED INTO POLITICAL CHANGE.

4. AN EDITORIAL IN INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE UUSI SUOMI NOTED THE "DISTINCT DIFFERENCE" BETWEEN THE SWEDISH AND FINNISH EXPERIENCES IN RELATING VOTER SENTIMENT TO POLITICAL POWER. IT POINTED OUT THAT A TRIUMPH AT THE POLLS SIMILAR TO THAT IN SWEDEN WOULD NOT RESULT IN TRANSFER OF LEADERSHIP TO BOURGEOIS GROUPS IN FINLAND, WHERE IN FACT THEY ALREADY HAVE A PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY. HOWEVER, THE PAPER SAID, THE REJECTION OF SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC IDEAS BY A MAJORITY OF SWEDES SHOULD PROVIDE FINNISH BOURGEOIS PARTIES WITH FOOD FOR THOUGHT "SINCE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS THEY SEEM TO HAVE LACKED THE BELIEF IN, AND DESIRE TO PRESENT, A COMMON ALTERNATIVE TO THE LEFT, PARTICULARLY TO THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS."
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